United Nations A/C.2/59/SR.16

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
11 February 2005

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 16th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 20 October 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Balazero ..... (Peru)

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04-56245 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 85: Sustainable development (*continued*) (A/59/25, Suppl. No. 25, A/59/262, A/59/81-E/2004/63, A/59/115 and A/59/158)

(a) **Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development** (*continued*) (A/59/220 and A/59/167)

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(f) **Convention on Biological Diversity** (*continued*) (A/59/197)

(g) **United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development** (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Dabbas** (Jordan) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. In recent years, despite global instability, particularly in the Middle East, Jordan had forged ahead. Because of the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the east of Jordan and the Iraqi war to its west, investor interest in the region had been reduced considerably and trade flows had been affected. The loss of oil revenue and the disruption of trade with Iraq had had a very adverse impact on the Jordanian economy.

2. In 1989, Jordan had suffered an economic crisis and the reform measures it had taken in the early 1990s had paid off in macroeconomic stability by 1999. With the accession of King Abdullah II to the throne, the pace of reform had quickened and new strategies and initiatives had been pursued to improve the living standards of Jordanians. To date, the results had been encouraging. By late July 2004, foreign exchange reserves had risen to US$ 4.6 billion, external debt had been brought down to 68 per cent of GDP and inflation had been contained. Jordan's GDP had increased steadily, posting a 7.2 per cent growth rate in the first half of 2004, driven by a 43 per cent export increase in the first seven months of 2004, and should reach US$ 3 billion for the full year. To maintain its economic growth, however, Jordan had to address national issues of poverty and unemployment, aid dependency and chronic water shortages.

3. Along with its economic policy reforms, Jordan had embarked on comprehensive political and social reforms with a view to achieving sustainable development, becoming a modern, tolerant and open society and serving as an Arab and Islamic model. To phase in a value system that respected diversity, minority rights, individual and civil liberties, the Government of Jordan had adopted a reform programme focusing on education, the judiciary, women's rights, women's empowerment, human rights, people's participation and electoral legislation.

4. There was no disregarding, however, the central question of the Arab-Israeli conflict which loomed large over the region in which Jordan was located. While that conflict was no excuse for the lack of momentum in social reform areas such as the rights of women, movement on political reforms without a parallel serious effort to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict might lead to the wrong results. Progress must be made on both tracks simultaneously, if the frustration and anger resulting from the continuation of the occupation were not to result in a social shift towards extremism.

5. The Middle East was approaching a turning point in its history. As they grew more acute, many of the region's long-standing problems of poverty, overpopulation and economic deprivation were threatening the stability of the region. Vast resources were being siphoned from economic and social development into military spending. The population had almost doubled and the labour force was growing by 3 per cent a year, faster than the rate in other regions of the world. Throughout the region, crowds of unemployed, often well-educated young men sat

around wondering why they had no jobs, why their families were poor and who was to blame. A sustained effort to promote commerce, jobs and a free economy throughout the region would help to restore the dignity of all and unleash the potential of entrepreneurs, investors and civic leaders to create wealth, rebuild institutions and escape the culture of violence. The pursuit of economic prosperity could facilitate the quest for peace as people-to-people contacts were forged, regardless of politics, and constituencies with a vested interest in peace were created.

6. **Mr. Siow Huat** (Malaysia) expressed appreciation for the quality of the reports submitted under the agenda item and thanked the Secretary-General for the report on the Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development as reflected (A/59/220). His delegation associated itself with the statements made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by Indonesia on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

7. It had emerged from the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development that a significant number of countries would not be able to halve by 2015 the number of their nationals without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation services, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General. Many of those countries would also not be able to meet the deadline of 2005 for preparing integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans. Clearly, the fulfilment of commitments agreed at the Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development would make it possible to provide those countries with the assistance they needed.

8. Recalling the views expressed the preceding week by Ms. Tibaijuka, Executive Director of the United Nations Programme for Human Settlements (UN-Habitat) to the Second Committee, he stressed that the issue of human settlements was crucial to the discussion of water and sanitation. He hoped that the bureaux of UN-Habitat and the Commission on Sustainable Development would be able to solve the problem of the scheduling of the Commission's thirteenth session and the twentieth session of the UN-Habitat Governing Council.

9. On 16 October, at the observance of World Food Day and the fifty-ninth anniversary of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), it had been announced that 840 million of the world's people, mostly in the developing countries, were undernourished. Hunger and desperate means of producing food had led to an unprecedented loss of biodiversity. Unsustainable processes of development had exerted tremendous pressure on natural resources and unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, especially in the industrialized countries, were threatening the fragility of the natural environment.

10. Malaysia welcomed the convening in January 2005 in Mauritius of the high-level International Meeting for the 10-year Review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and hoped that it would culminate in concrete and practical measures which would enable such countries to achieve stable economic growth and sustainable development. Malaysia would send high-level representation to that meeting and had decided to contribute to the voluntary trust fund set up to finance the programme activities of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

11. The conservation of biological diversity remained a top priority for Malaysia; as a member of the Group of Like-Minded Megadiverse Countries, it was deeply concerned by the destruction of that diversity. Recognizing its rich cultural heritage, Malaysia had formulated a national policy on biological diversity to provide direction, strategies, plans and programmes to conserve the nation's biological resources and to ensure that they were used in a sustainable manner. To support the national strategy for sustainable growth, the Government of Malaysia had placed biotechnology at the centre of its science and technology and its research and development activities.

12. His country had hosted the seventh meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in February 2004 and the first meeting of the Conference serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, whose work had been described in the note by the Secretary-General on implementation of United Nations environmental conventions (A/59/197). Malaysia was pleased that the Russian Federation had decided to sign and ratify the

Kyoto Protocol and his country had taken specific and concrete steps to reduce the release of greenhouse gases.

13. **Mr. Chiriboga** (Ecuador) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the statements made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the representative of Peru on behalf of the Andean Community. He thanked Mr. Egeland, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for introducing the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/59/228).

14. A number of factors, including climate change and poverty, had increased the risk of natural disasters and the fragility of the countries facing them. Poverty diminished the poor countries' capacity to cope with the effects of those disasters.

15. Ecuador supported the work of the International Research Centre on the El Niño Phenomenon, which had been established there in 2003 with the support of the World Meteorological Organization and the inter-agency secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. The populations of the countries most severely affected by El Niño and La Niña benefited from the work of the Centre, which focused on early warning, risk management and the development of human resources within the framework of a strategy based on training, information and assessment of the comparative advantages of the region in terms of sustainable development. He welcomed the completion of the first pilot project for agriculture carried out by the Centre with a view to assessing the risks linked to the cultivation of grasses in Ecuador's coastal zones. The climate risk index developed by the Centre would allow farmers to protect their small investments and ensure that they did not have to emigrate.

16. He recalled that the first biennial meeting on the El Niño phenomenon had taken place in the Galapagos Islands in September 2004, in the context of follow-up to meetings on the early warning system held in Bonn and Shanghai in 2003, and that the International Alexander von Humboldt Conference would take place in May 2005. He underscored the importance attached by his Government to the International Research Centre on the El Niño Phenomenon in that regard and expressed the hope that, with the assistance of the international community, his country and the rest of the region would no longer be hit by disasters causing incalculable human and material losses.

17. The World Conference on Disaster Reduction, to be held in Kobe in 2005, would give the international community the opportunity to strengthen existing cooperation mechanisms and devise a concrete plan of action comprising specific and viable measures as well as an efficient follow-up mechanism in order to ensure the full implementation of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in that regard, as recommended by the General Assembly. The results of that Conference would undoubtedly influence the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In conclusion, he reiterated the need to provide financial support to the International Research Centre on the El Niño Phenomenon.

18. **Mr. Soulama** (Burkina Faso) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

19. More than ten years after the Earth Summit and two years after the 2002 Johannesburg Summit, the destruction of the environment was continuing at the global level. The phenomenon of globalization had led to a widening of the development gap between North and South. It had become clear that the greatest common denominator among the developing countries was poverty, and the main consequence of that situation was the destruction of the environment and natural resources.

20. In that context, responsibilities must be shared. First, because most developed countries had not honoured their oft-renewed commitment to increase official development assistance to 0.7 per cent of their gross national product. Secondly, because the developing countries had not always been able to demonstrate good governance in the area of development.

21. Burkina Faso had established specific sub-sectoral programmes with a view to stepping up the protection of natural resources and improving their management. With regard to the measures taken to implement the United Nations conventions on the environment, he said that, within the framework of the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Burkina Faso had a national case-study, a strategy and a plan of action. Projects for the

conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity had also been developed and implemented with the support of the Global Environment Facility. An initial communication on climate change had been drafted and the Government had adopted a strategy for the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

22. In the context of the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, a national action programme to combat desertification had been launched in order to establish, in urban and rural areas across the country, a development framework comprising integrated measures to combat desertification and its causes. In order to coordinate the activities of development partners in that area, an NGO steering committee to combat desertification had been set up.

23. In spite of those measures, much still remained to be done to reverse the ongoing destruction of natural resources. Wooded areas, which had covered 150,000 square kilometres in 1980, had accounted for 50,000 square kilometres in 2000. Reforested areas had increased slightly, from 21,000 square kilometres in 1980 to 50,000 in 2000, which represented an average yearly increase of 4 per cent.

24. He stressed that desertification was a serious impediment to sustainable development because it led to famine, food insecurity and poverty, which frequently exacerbated social, economic and political tensions, the source of many armed conflicts. To combat that phenomenon, all interested parties, in particular the industrialized countries and international development organizations, must take concrete measures so that the Convention could become an instrument for the attainment of sustainable development. Burkina Faso lamented the fact that resources from the Global Environment Facility had not been made available more promptly to fund country-based activities to combat desertification. He called on the Facility to participate, as agreed, in desertification projects undertaken within the framework of the Convention. In view of the global challenge of combating desertification, he reiterated his support for the secretariat of the Convention and urged the international community to provide it with all the necessary assistance. He congratulated Mr. Diallo on his re-election as Executive Secretary of the Convention.

25. In conclusion, he called on the international community to take immediate action in order to ensure that future generations inherited a healthy and inhabitable planet.

26. **Mr. Lolo** (Nigeria) congratulated Mr. Diallo on his re-election as Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. On behalf of the Nigerian Government and people, he also congratulated Ms. Wangari Maathai, who had received the Nobel Peace Prize for her environmental protection work. His delegation thanked the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for having prepared the reports under agenda item 85. His delegation wished to associate itself with the statements made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the representative of South Africa on behalf of the African Group.

27. The twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had provided an opportunity to review the progress made in the implementation of Agenda 21, with particular focus on water, sanitation and human settlements. Political will, coupled with sustained action, would make it possible to achieve the objectives of Agenda 21 as well as the Millennium Development Goals. However, success would depend on collective action and shared responsibility at both the national level, since primary responsibility for implementation lay with States, and the global level, which must complement and support national activities.

28. Public-private partnerships were essential to foster the spirit of entrepreneurship and mobilize the resources necessary for the implementation of development programmes and projects. The sharing of experiences and best practices and capacity-building would also enhance the implementation of programmes. In that connection, Nigeria welcomed the innovations in the organization of work of the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, in particular the expert panels, interactive debates, the Learning Centre and the participation of major groups throughout the session.

29. The challenge ahead consisted in building on the success of the twelfth session of the Commission by highlighting the importance of its work programme at the political level and ensuring broad participation in

its implementation. Preparations for the twelfth session, which had been a review session, had raised a number of questions. The same was true for the thirteenth session, which, as a policy session, must adopt action-oriented, focused and unambiguous solutions. Nigeria took the view that the thirteenth session of the Commission should not serve as a pretext for reopening the debate on issues that had not been the subject of intergovernmental consensus. There must be no rolling back of the commitment to implement Agenda 21 in a holistic and integrated manner. The intersessional meeting that would take place before the thirteenth session should be used to prepare a concise and well-structured document for negotiation that took into account the issues affecting all the items on the Commission's programme of work.

30. Nigeria congratulated the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which had raised awareness of environmental problems in Africa. The Programme's support for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment had facilitated the adoption of the African Environment Initiative by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2003 in Maputo. The Programme must be strengthened in order to increase its efficiency in dealing with environmental problems. To that end, Nigeria took the view that the international environmental governance process must be accelerated. It welcomed the steps taken in that regard, in particular the commencement of work by the High-level Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on an Intergovernmental Strategic plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building.

31. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa was a useful tool to combat poverty. Nigeria called on the Global Environment Facility and the Parties to the Convention to conclude their memorandum of understanding as soon as possible. It endorsed the Secretary-General's appeal to the Parties to the Convention to pay their contributions to the core budget.

32. Desertification contributed to poverty, hunger, disease and food insecurity. In order to combat those problems as well as desertification itself and to improve the social and economic situation of its population, Nigeria had launched a national shelterbelt and had begun to plant drought-resistant trees in the North of the country, which could benefit from additional support from donors. In order to protect its biological diversity, it had established a national biodiversity committee, which was responsible for drawing up a national framework for action pursuant to the Cartagena Protocol and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

33. In conclusion, he re-emphasized that the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was Africa's flagship sustainable development programme and regretted the fact that the plenary debate on NEPAD had coincided with the Second Committee's consideration of sustainable development. He hoped that, in future, such clashes would be avoided.

34. **Mr. Sunaga** (Japan), referring to the three issues on which his country placed high priority, said, with regard to water and sanitation, that the Advisory Board established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and chaired by the former Prime Minister of Japan had identified 10 thematic priorities at its first meeting: political will and accountability, water as a human right and social dimension, financing, capacity-building, water-related disasters, integrated water resources management, technology, partnership, respective roles of the private and public sectors, monitoring and statistics on water and sanitation. After discussion by three working groups, those issues would be further discussed by the Advisory Board at its next meeting. Japan believed that the interaction of the Advisory Board with other bodies in the United Nations, in particular the Commission on Sustainable Development, would be extremely useful in preparing for the high-level plenary session the following year and hoped that it would make significant contributions to the fourteenth session of the Commission.

35. Given the recent succession of major disasters, his country wished to share its long experience in disaster management with other countries. The participants in the forthcoming world conference on the matter to be held in Kobe would be able to review the Yokohama strategy which has established an action plan for raising awareness, at all levels of society, of the importance of disaster reduction, promoting cooperation among different sectors and forging effective mechanisms to reduce the impact of natural disasters.

36. As a contribution to the draft International Implementation Scheme for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, UNESCO had proposed

interlinked strategies for advocacy, partnership and capacity-building, research and innovation, and evaluation. Japan was currently preparing a draft resolution to be submitted to the Committee in which it requested UNESCO to finalize the International Implementation Scheme, invited Member States to take part in the Decade and called for a review of the Decade in five years' time.

37. **Mr. Siv** (United States of America) noted with satisfaction that the era of implementation of standards and principles for sustainable development had begun but noted the need for stronger partnerships and the mobilization of greater resources.

38. At its twelfth session, the Commission on Sustainable Development had emphasized implementation and had thus achieved record levels of participation and a strong desire for action.

39. At its thirteenth session, the Commission would focus on deliverables, and build on the achievements of the earlier session. He hoped that the Bureau would act quickly to define an action-oriented framework that enabled all stakeholders to define what they expected of the session.

40. In order to advance implementation, it was important for the Secretariat to gather and manage information on who was doing what and on successes and failures in the context of sustainable development efforts. It was in that spirit that the United States had supported the creation, by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, of a partnerships database. The Commission on Sustainable Development at its thirteenth session should adopt a framework for action in which priority needs were matched with specific actors. Governments and other stakeholders would use it as a platform for monitoring the progress of major ongoing and planned actions.

41. By adopting a more interactive and action-oriented approach, the Commission should be able to make a meaningful contribution to the preparations for the major meeting planned for the following year. It should draw on practical experience and promote measures to expand capacities, create opportunities and enable concrete progress on development goals in specific countries and contexts. Lasting change must be achieved if the objectives were to be reached. Other United Nations bodies might follow suit and change their methods of work in order to meet the new challenges.

42. **Ms. Núñez de Odremán** (Venezuela) associated herself with the statements made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by Peru on behalf of the Andean Community.

43. Venezuela was determined to attain the internationally agreed goals and had made major political changes to promote sustainable development. It had launched a new national development strategy with integrated management of resources based on ecological, geographical, social, cultural, political and economic conditions and involving the participation of the public. The sustainable utilization of resources was a matter for the State and for society, which were jointly responsible for the preservation of the natural environment.

44. Despite the obvious determination of the international community to achieve sustainable development, as evidenced by the adoption of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, it had to be admitted that the natural environment was continuing to deteriorate. It was a matter of urgency to achieve goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals, to take concrete measures to combat poverty, to radically change the non-viable means of production and consumption imposed by the current economic system, and to stimulate social development through sustainable management of natural resources, all of which required a firm commitment by the international community.

45. It was essential to find additional financial resources, to make transfers of technology to enable the developing countries to manage their natural resources more effectively and, above all, to eliminate the political conditions attached to cooperation in order to establish an economic model more in keeping with the ideals of peace, social justice and solidarity.

46. At the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the international community would draw up environmental strategies in three areas of great importance to Venezuela and to the developing countries — water, sanitation and human settlements — but the Commission would have to reconcile the interests of North and South countries.

47. It was essential to allocate more funds to the Convention to Combat Desertification in order to combat poverty and achieve sustainable development. Measures must be adopted to strengthen the integrated management of the Caribbean Sea to reduce the

harmful effects of pollution, prevent natural disasters and eliminate harmful socio-economic activities. Measures must also be taken to halt the disturbing decline in fauna and flora at all levels in order to progress towards the 2010 targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and to provide all necessary assistance for that purpose to the developing countries.

48. **Mr. Sosa** (Dominican Republic) associated himself with the statement by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He recalled that his country had recently been hard hit by Hurricane Jeanne, which had destroyed homes, communication routes and port facilities, as well as tourist infrastructure, at a time when the country was redoubling its efforts to revitalize its economy, and welcomed the spirit of solidarity displayed by the international community.

49. Being aware that, in order to develop in a sustainable manner, countries must have at their disposal mechanisms specifically intended to prevent natural disasters and mitigate their impact, the Dominican Republic had established its National Commission on the Prevention of Natural Disasters.

50. At the same time, the Dominican Republic considered that developed countries which had the scientific, technical and financial means necessary to prevent disasters and limit the damage they caused should assist the Governments and national bodies of countries at risk from natural disasters in providing relief to the populations affected and in attaining their sustainable development objectives.

51. Cooperation should be established at the regional and international levels among financial institutions and Governments, non-governmental organizations and civil society, as the participation of all players was essential to help the poor countries to deal with recurrent disasters.

52. The Dominican Republic also called on the international financial institutions and the entire international community to help Haiti to recover from the crisis that the country was currently undergoing.

53. **Mr. Andjaba** (Namibia), associating himself with the statements made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by South Africa on behalf of the Group of African States, said that desertification meant food insecurity, famine, poverty and social and political tensions in countries that had experienced it such as his. He hoped that, with the ratification of the Convention, specific measures would be taken to implement it and that substantial assistance would be provided to countries affected by desertification, particularly in Africa.

54. Namibia welcomed the assistance given by the Secretariat of the Convention to countries affected by desertification to develop and implement national action plans and to draft their national reports as well as the cooperation between the Secretariats of the Rio Conventions.

55. Namibia urged the secretariat of the Convention and of the United Nations Global Environment Facility to conclude a memorandum of understanding as soon as possible, making the Facility the financial mechanism of the Convention, and called for additional financial support for the Facility from other sources of funding. It also appealed for an increase in the level of resources allocated to sustainable land management during the fourth replenishment of the Trust Fund.

56. **Ms. Soto** (Costa Rica) associated herself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and said that for Costa Rica sustainable development required the participation of all members of the international community and of society.

57. A small country with a wealth of flora and fauna, Costa Rica had acceded to many international, regional and subregional environmental protection instruments and sought to strike a balance between its environmental protection and poverty reduction efforts. The Congress was currently considering legislation that, if approved, would provide constitutional guarantees on the environment.

58. The country was currently formulating a national strategy to manage its resources more effectively and was reforming the management and development of water resources. Costa Rica had an abundant supply of water. However, the treatment of all wastewater remained a challenge, which was compounded by population growth and concentration in the major cities.

59. Like all developing countries, Costa Rica had to confront the problems linked to water, sanitation and human settlements, which required significant investments. It therefore hoped that the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable

Development would result in the adoption of specific measures for developing countries aimed at technology transfer and capacity-building. It would also be a valuable opportunity for all stakeholders to share lessons learned and best practices.

60. Costa Rica had found innovative ways to utilize its natural resources to obtain funds and reinvest them in sustainable development schemes, such as charging polluters for disposal, which allowed better control over sources of waste; including the cost of water resource protection in the price of water; and ensuring adequate quality levels based on the intended use of the water. The Government had also established a programme of payment for environmental services such as water protection and greenhouse gas mitigation, funded by both public and private sources such as hydroelectric power producers and ecotourism agencies, to help forest owners in their efforts of reforestation, conservation and protection of the forest cover. Costa Rica would be submitting such new initiatives to finance sustainable forest management for consideration by experts in the coming year. It would also be hosting the second International Expert Meeting on the 10-Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production.

61. Deeply concerned about the destruction of fauna and flora in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, Costa Rica refrained from any destructive fishing practices such as bottom-trawling and supported the adoption of a moratorium on the practice in all oceans and seas.

62. **Ms. Houngbedji** (Benin), associating herself with the statements made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by South Africa on behalf of the Group of African States, said that poverty relief must not be dissociated from efforts to achieve better natural resource management, given that desertification was as great a danger for people as for the environment. Benin believed that the contribution of the Convention to Combat Desertification to reducing extreme poverty must be better analysed.

63. The Global Environment Facility, the financing mechanism of the Convention, must have sufficient resources for the Convention to be implemented fully. All Governments, as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector, particularly the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, must demonstrate a firm commitment in that respect.

64. **Mr. Baatar** (Mongolia), associating himself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that Mongolia had established the legal basis for environmental management, but that ongoing problems of pastureland management, greenhouse gas reduction, urban air quality improvement, the introduction of fuel-efficient heating systems and improved incentives to promote conservation, protection of fragile ecosystems and wildlife, improvement of forest management and efforts to combat desertification could be tackled only with the help of many partners and by means of development assistance.

65. Aware that water was a factor for economic growth and of the need to improve water supply and sanitation services so as to improve the livelihoods of poor people, Mongolia had in 2004 amended its legislation on urban water-supply and sewer networks in cities and settlements, in force since 2002, to streamline watershed basin management. With the help of partners, it was also seeking to ensure a supply of safe drinking water, rehabilitate rural deep-water wells and bring about change in consumer behaviour.

66. Convinced of the need to educate and inform the public about environmental protection and sustainable development, his Government had implemented an educational programme that addressed the environment in a long-term perspective.

67. Because Mongolia was vulnerable to snowfall, drought, flash floods and earthquakes, it had adopted a new law to strengthen its disaster management system and created the National Disaster Management Agency. His Government had also invited the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team to evaluate Mongolia's disaster response system and currently had many recommendations that would enable it to strengthen its disaster management capacity.

68. **Mr. Smaili** (Algeria), speaking on agenda item 85 (e), associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. In the report on implementation of United Nations environmental conventions (A/59/197), the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification stressed that desertification contributed to food insecurity, famine and poverty and that it was a serious obstacle to sustainable development. That statement accurately

reflected the importance of implementing the Convention for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in countries affected by desertification. The concern raised by that phenomenon was shared by all in Africa and the New Partnership for Africa's Development made desertification one of its priorities. Algeria was implementing a national plan of agricultural and rural development that included a national plan to combat desertification and a national reforestation plan, mobilizing all the necessary means to better integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development.

69. While the designation of the Global Environment Facility as the financing mechanism of the Convention to Combat Desertification and the improved access to its financial resources would broaden the means of implementation of the Convention, they would not cover needs, as the Executive Secretary of the Convention said clearly in the aforementioned report. It was therefore to be hoped that, during the next replenishment of the Facility, contributions for financing the implementation of the Convention would increase significantly.

70. The proclamation of 2006 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, which reflected the will of the international community to accelerate implementation of the Convention, would certainly help to make international public opinion more aware of desertification and mobilize more financial resources to combat it. The establishment of the World Deserts Foundation, an intergovernmental organization that had been granted observer status by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in July 2004, should also help to promote implementation of the Convention.

71. Coordination between the secretariats of the Conventions on Desertification, Biological Diversity and Climate Change and cooperation between the relevant international organizations and institutions were indispensable for attaining the goals of the Conventions quickly and efficiently. Concerning the Convention to Combat Desertification, it was hoped that the seventh Conference of the Parties, to be held in Bonn in October 2005, would result in the adoption of a memorandum of understanding that the Secretariats of the Convention and of the United Nations Global Environment Facility had been urged to elaborate. It was also to be hoped that, during the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly in 2005 to review follow-up to the Millennium Declaration, specific measures would be taken to give the necessary impetus to efforts to combat desertification and drought.

72. **Mr. Goonesekere** (Sri Lanka), speaking on agenda item 85 (g), said he associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and of China. Given that 2005 would mark the beginning of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, the discussions on the item at the current General Assembly session were of special importance. There should be heightened awareness, both among members of society at large and among schoolchildren, of the pivotal role of education in achieving a sustainable development. In that regard, Sri Lanka appreciated the work of UNESCO as the lead agency for the Decade, especially regarding its encouragement of innovative transfers between countries, and welcomed the recommendations and guidelines contained in the International Implementation Scheme of UNESCO.

73. After the Rio Summit of 1992, Sri Lanka had begun to follow a more focused policy towards sustainable development, and had looked to Agenda 21 as a guideline regarding education, public awareness and training. Moreover, Sri Lanka had applied the recommendations of the Jomtien Conference. Considering its per capita income, Sri Lanka had done well in the education field compared to countries with similar income levels. The major contributory factor in achieving its objective was that the overwhelming majority of primary and secondary schools provided free education. There were also programmes for providing free midday meals, free textbooks and free school uniform material, and scholarships to alleviate the financial burden on poor families. Those programmes had helped increase enrolment figures and achieve a literacy rate of 92.5 per cent for boys and 87.9 per cent for girls. The current gap between boys and girls should be considerably narrowed in the near future, as enrolment of girls increased. It should be underscored, however, that in the recent past, owing to the armed conflict in the North and East, the budgetary allocation for education had declined from about 15 per cent to 10 per cent of the national budget.

74. Sri Lanka was focusing on primary and secondary education, without overlooking other types of education. Street children and children from economically depressed families who did not attend school could benefit from training programmes tailored

to community skill needs. University education was highly competitive because of the limited places available at universities. As for primary and secondary education, the cost of university education was entirely borne by the State and students from needy families received financial assistance through a scholarship scheme. Since high unemployment among the young had been a factor in the civil unrest of the early 1970s and late 1980s, several programmes had been established to integrate them into the workforce. Changes had also been made to graduate courses to make them more relevant to national development strategies.

75. Education should not be limited to children and young people but should also be available for adults who wanted to improve their lives. In Sri Lanka, continuing educational opportunities were provided through the Open University system. That was also justified by the fact that in the future Sri Lanka would need a flexible workforce that could be retrained to meet the requirements of advancing technologies and changes in the workplace. If the country's immediate aim was to ensure that all boys and girls completed primary education, strategies needed to be developed to surpass that goal. In that regard, UNESCO, as the lead agency of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, would have an important role to play.

76. **Mr. Swe** (Myanmar) said that he associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and with that made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The devastating cyclones that had recently engulfed the region had again demonstrated the serious consequences of disrupting the ecological balance. It was encouraging that both developed and developing countries were giving greater attention to environmental protection when undertaking their economic activities.

77. At its twelfth session, the Commission on Sustainable Development had made a critical examination of the follow-up to Agenda 21 in the sphere of water, sanitation and human settlements. Its work had been productive, but the momentum created to follow up the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation needed to be maintained. At its thirteenth session, the Commission should adopt measures to expedite the Plan of Implementation and to remove obstacles that were slowing it down.

78. The implementation of Agenda 21 and of the Johannesburg Plan was the responsibility of all members of the international community, which should therefore make every effort to see it through. In that regard, international regional and subregional cooperation was essential and all the major groups would need to be encouraged to participate in the action undertaken. Since Governments had primary responsibility for sustainable development, both developed and developing countries should adopt policies and strategies on sustainable development and implement them strictly.

79. Myanmar had enacted a national environmental policy upon which it was relying to attain sustainable development. In addition to a national environmental commission, a high-level committee for nature conservation had recently been established with the goal of integrating modalities for assessing the environmental impact of economic activities in the planning and formulation of economic development projects.

80. Forests still covered 52.28 per cent of the territory of Myanmar, thanks to an efficient system of sustainable forest management and reforestation. Forests had been planted over an area exceeding 100,000 hectares and nearly 500,000 hectares of natural forests were systematically protected. In addition, the Government was currently implementing a programme to redevelop and preserve the Bago mountain range, which contained the best teak species in the country. That programme should increase productivity in the mountain range forest area, supply water to farmers in the region and promote forestry locally with grass-roots involvement.

81. As a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity and to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, Myanmar was trying hard to preserve the rich biological diversity of its territory, which contained, among others, 100 types of bamboo, about 30 species of rattan, 800 species of orchids, close to 1,000 species of birds, almost 300 species of mammals and approximately 360 known species of reptiles. A tiger census had been undertaken in 1999 with the collaboration of the Wildlife Conservation Society in New York, and a tiger reserve — the largest in the

world — had been established in the Hukuang Valley in north-western Myanmar.

82. Fully convinced that water, sanitation and human settlements were vital elements of the quality of life, the Government had made freshwater supply for agriculture, industry and households one of its top priorities. It had built 246 dams and reservoirs over the past 16 years and had adopted a 30-year rural development plan, which would provide drinking water to every village in Myanmar. Moreover, in the framework of the national efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals, a workshop on the elaboration of strategies for water supply and environmental hygiene had recently been organized with the cooperation of the UNICEF Office in Myanmar.

83. **Mr. Elisaia** (Samoa), speaking on behalf of the members of the Pacific Islands Forum represented at the United Nations (Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and his own country), noted that the 2005 Mauritius International Meeting had great significance for all members of the Forum. One of the first tasks of participants at the Meeting would be to reaffirm the relevance of the Declaration of Barbados and the Programme of Action, because the implementation of those goals was of crucial importance for the members of the Forum. They would also need to examine new sustainable-development issues facing the small island developing States since the adoption of the Declaration and the Programme of Action. The Meeting should therefore serve to remind the international community that the small island developing States still needed its assistance to tackle their own problems and for their development.

84. The informal negotiations on the draft strategy for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action had progressed well. It was vital that the participants in the Meeting should agree on a specific document focused on the future, and so far the negotiations augured well. Hopefully, the Meeting would lead to other interesting results for the small island developing States. In that regard, the Forum was encouraging those States and their development partners to come to Mauritius to establish development activities and to participate in events taking place on the sidelines of the Meeting. It also encouraged the Secretariat to make every effort to promote and facilitate the creation of partnerships during the Meeting. The Forum stressed that Governments should send high-level representatives to ensure the success of the Meeting and invited them to do so.

85. **Mr. Elbakly** (Egypt), speaking on agenda item 85 (a), said that his delegation endorsed the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 the international community had committed itself to achieving a balanced and clear-cut package of sustainable-development objectives, but more than 10 years had passed since then, and not only had many of those objectives not been attained but the gap between the developed and the developing countries had continued to widen. The number of people living below the threshold of absolute poverty had increased, and environmental degradation was reaching alarming levels.

86. With regard to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the need was simply to implement what had already been agreed upon. The lack of implementation was not due to the working method of the Commission on Sustainable Development but rather to countries' failure to deliver on their commitments, in particular to provide the necessary means of implementation, notably financial and technical ones. The agreements reached at Monterrey must therefore be used to release the necessary resources for implementation of the Johannesburg Plan. It was not enough just to list time-bound sustainable-development goals: the real need was to do everything possible to attain the goals, in other words to prepare detailed plans indicating how to procure the necessary financial and technical resources and stating the tasks of each of the parties. A start might be made by allocating the resources whose delivery had been announced at the Monterrey Conference to the attainment of some of the sustainable-development objectives. There was no way to talk about sustainable development without making the multilateral trade system the key vehicle for mobilizing the development resources needed by the developing countries.

87. In the case of Africa in particular, the developed countries must match the reforms undertaken by the African countries by abolishing the tariff barriers which prevented African products from reaching their markets, providing the African countries with ODA at the agreed levels, ensuring that Africa received a fair

share of international financial flows, and finding a lasting solution to the problem of external debt. The Commission's thirteenth session, in 2005, should provide an opportunity for progress in those areas and help in particular to overcome the persisting obstacles to the attainment of the targets for water, sanitation and human settlements.

88. The Strategic Intergovernmental Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building adopted by UNEP at its eighth special session in March 2004 marked a step towards the fulfilment of the Johannesburg commitments. It was to be hoped that at the Bali meeting the international community would show that it was determined to build up the capacities of the developing countries in order to enable them to develop without damaging the environment.

89. Egypt welcomed the increasing interest in partnerships as an additional means of attaining the objectives. Like most other countries, it felt nevertheless that partnerships were not a substitute for action by Governments and that it would be necessary to ensure that their results were satisfactory and compatible with the reference texts. To that end Egypt proposed that the Secretariat should produce periodic reports for the consideration of Member States on the results of existing partnerships, in particular on their contribution to the attainment of the sustainable-development objectives. Such reports should be based on information supplied by the partnerships in association with the Commission and United Nations system.

90. **Mr. Jimenez Sauma** (Mexico) said the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation remained a challenge to the international community, for the attainment of their objectives required considerable efforts and genuine political will. The Commission on Sustainable Development was the organ of the United Nations system best placed to evaluate the fulfilment of the commitments entered into at the Rio and Johannesburg summits; and while the results of the Commission's twelfth session were welcome, it was to be hoped that the policy discussion to be completed at its thirteenth session in 2005 would offer an opportunity to establish guidelines and agreements capable of producing concrete, immediate and quantifiable results.

91. With regard to the multilateral system for the protection of the environment, there should be greater convergence among the very large number of standards and conventions concerning the environment and natural resources, and at the lowest possible cost. Accordingly, his delegation urged the secretariats of the chemicals conventions to cooperate more closely with each other and welcomed the efforts made by UNEP to enhance the coherence of the international environmental treaty system, in particular its production of the Strategic Intergovernmental Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building.

92. Mexico attached very great importance to the protection of biological diversity, especially the biological resources found in its own territory. It therefore welcomed the decision taken by the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at their seventh Conference to draft and negotiate international arrangements for access to genetic resources and the distribution of their benefits with a view to the adoption of an instrument or instruments to give genuine effect to article 15 and article 8 (j) of the Convention and facilitate the attainment of the three objectives contained therein.

93. Many countries were currently in a very vulnerable position as a result of climate change and natural disasters. The incorporation of early-warning mechanisms and contingency plans in national development plans and the promotion of adaptation strategies should enable countries to cope better with the crises caused by such phenomena. Mexico had taken an active part in the work of the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and in the preparations for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, as well as making enormous efforts to modernize its own laws and regulations on earthquake-resistant construction, planning and regulation of human settlements, and prevention of natural disasters. It was to be hoped that at Kobe in 2005 the countries and the international bodies which collaborated with the competent national institutions would enter into firmer commitments with regard to disaster prevention, within the framework of the existing coordination arrangements.

94. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico was using various initiatives to promote cooperation, reduce the vulnerability of the countries of the region to disasters, and strengthen the structures of their national prevention agencies. The multidimensional vision of security adopted in October 2003 by the Organization of American States at its special

conference on security had marked a major step towards the creation of a broader international security framework, with a place for disaster prevention, which would respect national sovereignty while reinforcing international cooperation for the prevention of natural disasters.

95. **Mr. Gerus** (Belarus) said that his delegation welcomed the progress made in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It noted that the Commission on Sustainable Development had played a considerable role in that process and stressed the importance of ensuring that the Commission functioned effectively, for it was to adopt at its thirteenth session key decisions on the thematic cluster of issues relating to water, sanitation and human settlements.

96. In a similar vein, it was impossible to overestimate the importance of the work of the Economic Commission for Europe in the organization and coordination of the implementation of the international agreements on sustainable development in the region of Central and Eastern Europe.

97. Belarus welcomed and supported the initiative of Tajikistan in submitting a draft resolution entitled "Activities undertaken during the International Year of Freshwater, 2003, and further efforts to achieve the sustainable development of water resources". The International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015, proclaimed by the General Assembly, could make a significant contribution to the achievement of the water-related goals contained in the Millennium Declaration. His Government paid keen attention to issues of water supply and housing, which had been national priorities for 10 years. It relied on modern and environmentally sound techniques in the planning of urban development and construction of housing which met rigorous quality standards in rural and urban areas.

98. His delegation drew attention to a factor obstructing his country's sustainable development, i.e. the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster. Although 18 years had passed since the accident, millions of people were still living in areas contaminated by radiation in Belarus, Ukraine and Russia. Accordingly, the United Nations must not allow any slackening of its attention to that problem. It was necessary to continue to strengthen international cooperation, support the initiatives taken at the national level and improve the coordination arrangements to cope with the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. The international conference to be held in Minsk in 2006 on the twentieth anniversary of the disaster would certainly help to stimulate international cooperation to ensure the safety of nuclear installations used for peaceful purposes, as well as giving a fresh impetus to scientific research to determine the best strategy for the medical treatment and social re-adaptation of the people affected and speeding up the implementation of the projects for improvement of their living conditions. Such action was in the interest of all the countries of the world. Belarus hoped therefore that the conference would be supported not only by the countries victims of Chernobyl but also by donor countries, international organizations and the institutions of the United Nations system.

99. **Mr. Capelle** (Marshall Islands) said that his delegation fully associated itself with the statement made by Samoa on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Group concerning the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and that his own statement addressed the different but closely related topic of climate change.

100. The devastating impact of the recent hurricanes in the Caribbean region and the United States had further impressed on the international community the urgency and importance of the issue of climate change. His own region of the Pacific had not been spared; the small island of Niue had been literally devastated by Cyclone Heta in January and a typhoon had lashed the Micronesian island of Yap in April.

101. As underlined by a growing scientific consensus, the small island developing States were most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, although they contributed least to the problems and were the least able to adapt to changing weather patterns. The Marshall Islands had a tiny land size (approximately 180 square kilometres), consisting predominantly of low-lying atolls (averaging 2 metres above sea level). While they relied on the immense ocean surrounding them as a means of sustenance, it became their biggest concern during severe weather conditions and the sea-level rise ultimately threatened their very existence.

102. Although the small island developing States were committed to playing their part, strong leadership by the industrialized countries was required. Those States

renewed their support for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol and called on the countries which had not yet done so, in particular the major emitters, to ratify the Protocol without further delay. They also called on the international community to assist them in elaborating and implementing comprehensive adaptation strategies. He hoped that the international community would demonstrate a stronger international commitment, both at the Tenth Session of the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC and at the Mauritius International Meeting, to addressing the causes and mitigating the effects of climate change, particularly in the case of the small island developing States.

103. **Ms. Al-Harthy** (Oman) said that, driven by its sense of responsibility and its commitment to Agenda 21 and the resolutions adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, her country had actively followed up those resolutions by adopting a national plan and acceding to numerous regional and international conventions and treaties that established a practical framework for the protection of the environment and natural resources for development purposes.

104. In the Sultanate of Oman, development had always been people-centred. Adoption of the sustainable development model had therefore been a logical strategic choice for Oman, as it guaranteed to present and future generations their legitimate right to prosperity and a better life. Any strategy demanded considerable national efforts for the achievement of sustainable development using the know-how of the developed countries and the help of the competent national and international organizations. As a sign of its commitment to the principle of cooperation and collective action, Oman had dedicated the years 2001 and 2002 to the environment, in addition to which it had decided to observe an environment day on 8 January each year. It renewed its appeal to the international community to make the adjustments required by the developing countries, particularly in view of the changes taking place in the global economy, with a view to supporting regional and national development efforts by providing assistance in matters of finance, training and scientific research, as well as by helping to introduce modern technology and formulate plans and legislation designed to protect the environment, without losing sight of the need to establish a close connection between development and environmental protection.

105. **Ms. Homanovska** (Ukraine) said that she supported strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council in overseeing the system-wide coordination and balanced integration of the economic, environmental and social aspects of United Nations policies and programmes aimed at promoting sustainable development. To that end, one of the Council's coordination segments could be devoted to sustainable development issues. She also commended the measures taken by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in that connection, as well as those adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development in order to improve its programme and methods of work.

106. The experience of the last decade suggested that the regional dimension was a breeding ground for sustainable development, as was particularly apparent in such a dynamic region as Europe, where the current economic and financial imbalances among countries required a strong partnership framework. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) already had a significant number of sustainable development activities under way. Recent major initiatives in the region had included the Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development, held in early 2004 in Geneva, which had assessed the problems to be resolved in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements, bearing in mind the wide disparities in the ECE region.

107. It was clearly recognized in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation that countries bore the primary responsibility for their own development and that sound economic, social and environmental policies were key to the achievement of sustainable development. In that regard, she emphasized that Ukraine's national strategies had been developed in compliance with the commitments made at Johannesburg and that environmental considerations were systematically taken into account in all socio-economic structural reforms and other activities undertaken by the Ukrainian Government. In 2003, the Government had launched a comprehensive national programme on implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development for the period 2003-2015. That document provided a blueprint for building a national consensus around sustainable development and the promotion of economic growth, social development and a healthy environment. The establishment of a national board on sustainable

development, chaired by the President of Ukraine, should also be mentioned. Strategies had been adopted for the environmentally sustainable development of the basic sectors of the economy and work was under way to elaborate an environment code, create a national environment fund and establish a system of environmental audit, insurance and monitoring. An NGO council had also been established under the Ministry of Environment Protection in order to develop partnerships between the public sector and civil society. Ukraine's recent ratification of the Kyoto Protocol provided further evidence of its contribution to addressing environmental threats. Ukraine also fully shared the concerns relating to the specific development and environmental challenges faced by small island developing States.

108. In conclusion, she emphasized the importance of education for the achievement of sustainable development, a subject on which the ECE environment ministers had adopted a declaration in Kiev in 2003. Ukraine had also elaborated a national programme for ecological education.

109. **Mr. Alshabibi** (Yemen) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and welcomed the decision of the Secretary-General to establish an Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, water being a matter of considerable importance that was closely linked with sustainable development and social stability. A number of political studies in particular had concluded that there were three types of conflict in developing countries: border conflicts, ethnic conflicts and conflicts over water. He therefore reaffirmed that the international community should give priority to the problem of water in order to ensure that it did not worsen to the point where it became a source of conflict and an obstacle to development. As always, Yemen continued to attach particular importance to that issue; it was a top priority for the Government, which had established a Ministry of Water and Environment and worked tirelessly with regional and international organizations to address the shortage of water resources. It was ready to join in any initiative aimed at resolving the problem.

110. **Mr. Kiptoon** (Kenya) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statements made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the African Union.

111. Since the adoption of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21, the poor had continued to grow poorer and environmental degradation had also continued. It was encouraging to note, however, that the international community, through the United Nations, had been actively engaged in the debate on sustainable development, leading to the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The outcome of the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development should move that work forward and ensure the renewed commitment of the international community, in particular its willingness to provide the necessary means of implementation and create an international enabling environment.

112. Kenya noted with concern that the frequency and intensity of natural disasters was increasing and that the consequences were mostly felt by the poor and vulnerable in the developing countries. The international community should take firm steps to alleviate the suffering and destruction caused by such disasters, especially by addressing the issue of climate change, including the timely entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, and by devoting due attention to the problems of the small island developing States.

113. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification had made a positive contribution, particularly in Africa, but it would be successfully implemented only if the necessary resources were provided. Kenya therefore called for an increase in the level of resources to be allocated to land degradation under the fourth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund and also called on the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the Council of the Facility to conclude a memorandum of understanding aimed at clarifying the respective roles of the Parties in financing the implementation of the Convention. He further called on all countries to honour their financial commitments under the Convention. Despite the enormous challenges currently facing the world in the area of environment protection, the financial resources allocated to the institutions expected to implement environment protection programmes remained low, unstable and unpredictable. For example, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the principal United Nations body for environment, received only 4 per cent of its resources from the regular budget of the United Nations. He therefore called for an increase in the

amounts allocated to the Programme under that budget in order to ensure the effective discharge of its mandate.

114. In view of the importance attached by developing countries to capacity-building and technology support, he hoped that the Intergovernmental Strategic Plan on those subjects would be finalized at the meeting to be held in Bali (Indonesia) in December and subsequently adopted by the UNEP Governing Council in February 2005.

115. Concerning the location of the secretariat of the Environment Management Group (EMG), he expected that the UNEP Governing Council would consider the matter in a balanced manner, taking into account the fact that EMG brought together UNEP and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, both of which were headquartered in Nairobi.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.